

adstxtlab

Report: Status of ads.txt
(Worldwide/November 2017)



What's ads.txt?

- Mechanism to fight adfraud
- Can prevent advertisers from buying invalid traffic
- Simple logic of the textfile
- Official standard by the IAB
- DSP are already filtering or close to start filtering:
 - Google started filtering traffic based on ads.txt on 01 Nov 2017
 - Appnexus “will turn on automated enforcement in early 2018” (Brian O’Kelly, CEO Appnexus)
 - BidSwitch has started filtering traffic on a per client basis
 - PulsePoint started manual filtering and is most likely going to offer automatic filtering in Q1 (Leonid Litvin, VP Engineering PulsePoint)
 - “Ads.txt has significantly enhanced our inventory quality auditing process. With ads.txt, we can quickly identify and block sources of unauthorized or illegitimate impressions that claim to be from popular websites.” (Ian Trider, Director Operations at Centro)
 - TheTradeDesk started blocking on 15 Nov 2017

What happens with incorrect ads.txt files

Website can have 3 scenarios:

1. **ads.txt file present and ssp's record is listed:**
Best case, everything is fine!
2. **No ads.txt file present:**
Medium case, fine for now but DSP might start filtering on websites that do not have an ads.txt file in the future.
3. **ads.txt file present but ssp's record is not listed:**
Worst case, DSP will actively start filtering your traffic (traffic becomes un-sellable).

What we analyzed

- Time period November 2017
- Analyzed more than 2 000 000 domains:
 - .com: ~ 1 015 000
 - .org: ~ 120 000
 - .net: ~ 99 000
 - .ru: ~ 93 000
 - .de: ~ 56 000
 - .uk: ~ 36 000
 - .cn: ~ 34 000
 - .jp: ~ 28 000
 - .it: ~ 23 000
 - ...
- List contained:
 - Alexa Top 500 for several countries
 - IVW/Agof 1 000 for Germany
 - Quantcast Top 500 000

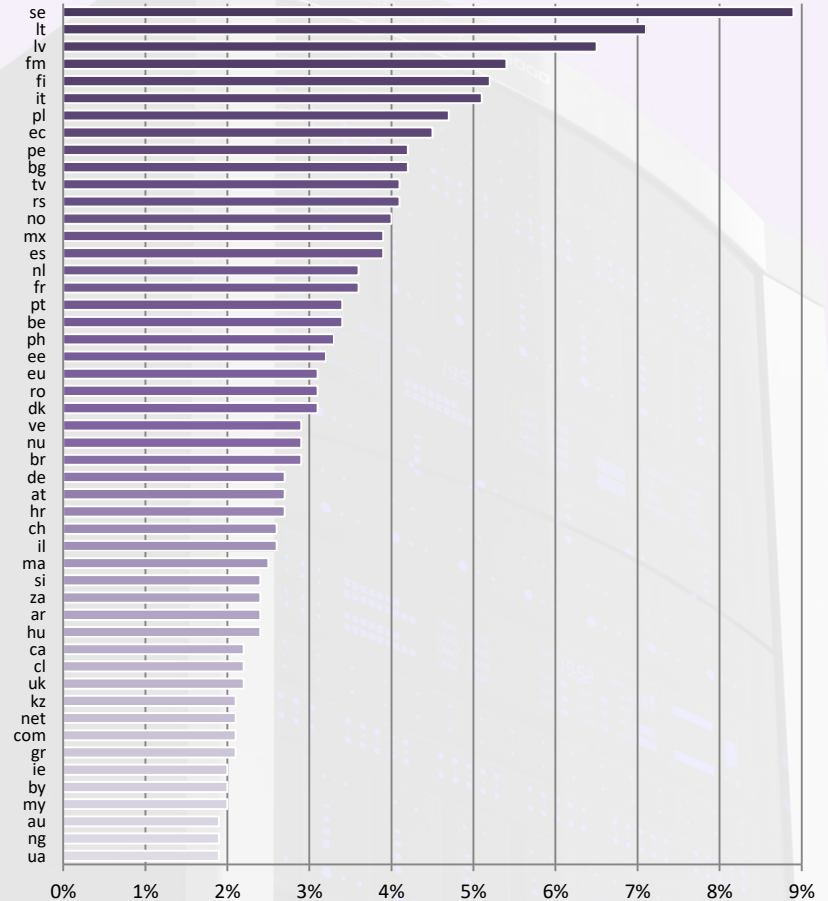
Quick overview

- Only 2% domains currently use ads.txt (~40 000 domains)
- 28% of ads.txt files contain errors or misspellings
- Almost 17% have only 1 record per file, but around 36% have more than 30 records
- 29% of the records are direct, 71% are reseller
- Google is present in almost 89% of all files, Appnexus 54%, Rubicon Project 52%
- 50% of the websites work with 8 or more companies in their ads.txt files

Country overview

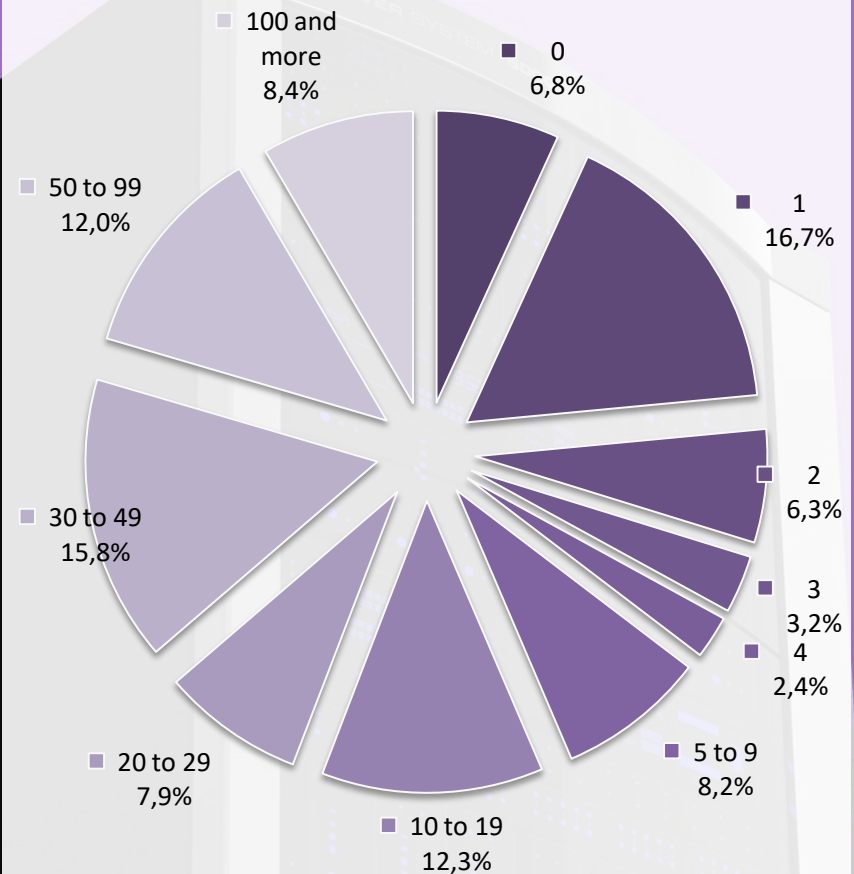
Countries with highest rates of ads.txt files:

1. Sweden (.se):	8.9 %
2. Lithuania (.lt) :	7.1 %
3. Latvia (.lv):	6.5 %
4. Fed. States of Micronesia (.fm):	5.4 %
5. Finland (.fi):	5.2 %
6. Italy (.it):	5.1 %
7. Poland (.pl):	4.7 %
8. Ecuador (.ec):	4.5 %
9. Peru (.pe):	4.2 %
10. Bulgaria (.bg):	4.2 %
...	
15. Spain (.es):	3.9 %
...	
17. France (.fr):	3.6 %
...	
28. Germany (.de):	2.7 %
...	
38. Canada (.ca):	2.2 %



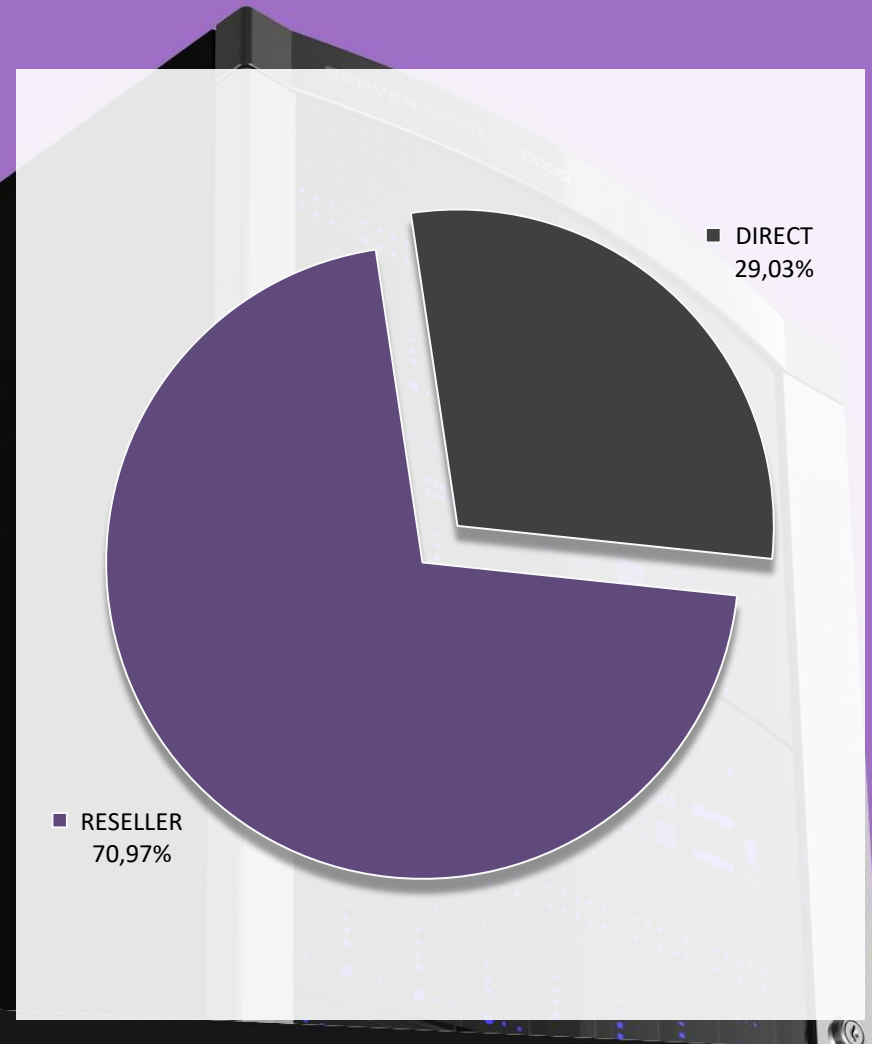
Records per ads.txt file

- About 4% of ads.txt files are empty/no record
- Around 17% have only one record
- More than 50% have 10 or more records per file
- More than 100 domains had more than 1 000 records



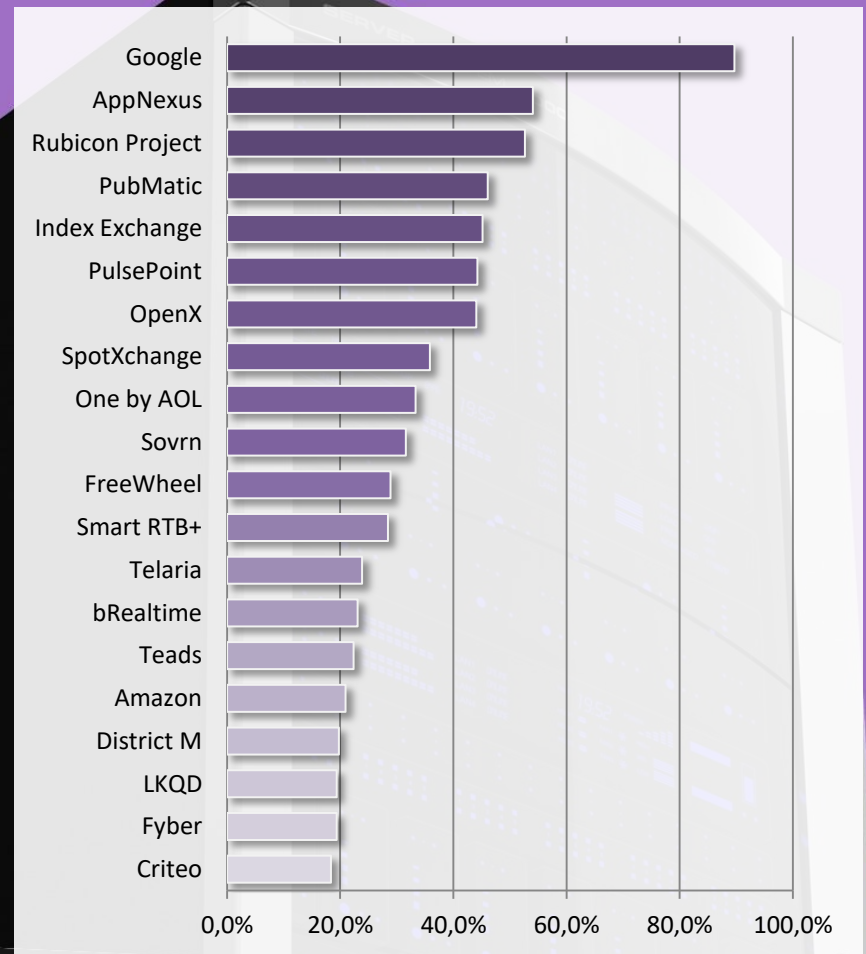
Direct vs. Reseller

- 29% of the records are DIRECT
- 71% of the records are RESELLER
- 8.5% of ads.txt files contain only DIRECT records
- Almost all cases (92%) when we found only one record, the record is from Google



Advertising companies

- Google is top of the market with around 90%
- Appnexus and Rubicon around 50%
- PubMatic, IndexExchange, Pulsepoint and OpenX around 45%
- SpotXchange as first „video-only“ company at around 35%, followed by FreeWheel at 29%
- “Specialists” Amazon and Criteo with around 20%



Top learnings

- Many domains did not yet implement ads.txt, SSPs/Exchanges need to communicate more
- Big differences in ads.txt usage among countries
- Many ads.txt files contain errors/misspellings, publishers should validate
- Publishers work with many companies at the same time, buyers should search for direct relationships
- Google dominates the market, has almost 90% exclusive domains
- Appnexus, Rubicon and others follow far behind Google's market share
- More than 35% of domains use video companies
- Important DSPs/Exchanges already started filtering by ads.txt. SSPs/Networks should check their publishers in order to avoid failing to (re-)sell traffic.

Contact

Adstxtlab.com is a project of the jaohawi AB, sweden. With more than 10 years of experience in the field of ad technology, we provide sophisticated solutions for the advertising industry.

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